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ABSTRACT

This document is a compilation of weekly reports written by the unit-based teachers in the Ypsilanti Preschool Demonstration Project. The purpose of the unit-based program is to supply preschoolers with the necessary educational and social skills to adapt readily to a kindergarten curriculum. The success of the program depends almost entirely upon the teachers' ability to use intuition in following the children's lead and to shape tentative explorations into solid learning experiences. The weekly reports view the program from five angles to provide different perspectives on the curriculum as it is brought to life in the classroom. The program is reviewed in terms of the goals the teachers have set, the units around which the activities revolve, the problems and small triumphs of particular children, the cognitive themes emphasized during the relatively structured Circle Time, and the teacher's observations of the children during Discovery Time (free play). (Author/AJ)

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Ypsilanti Preschool Curriculum Demonstration Project

THE UNIT-BASED CURRICULUM

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Ypsilanti Preschool Curriculum

Demonstration Project

Unit-Based Curriculum

Weekly Reports, 1969-1970

Teachers: Mary Lou Malte
Mary Martin

In these weekly reports written by the unit-based teachers, this program will be looked at from five angles to provide different perspectives on the curriculum as it is brought to life in the classroom. We will see the program in terms of the goals the teachers have set, the units around which the activities revolve, the problems and small triumphs of particular children, the "cognitive" themes emphasized during the relatively structured Circle Time, and the teacher's observations of the children during Discovery Time (free play).

This program has a very slim theoretical frame; it exists almost entirely in execution and depends for its sustenance on the ability of the teachers to follow the lead of the children and shape their tentative explorations into solid learning experiences. The teachers must do this mainly through intuition, since all the "theory" they have to go on is the traditional nursery school collection of social-emotional objectives transposed to a setting for disadvantaged children.

INTRODUCTION BY THE TEACHERS

The unit-based program is basically child-centered, having evolved from the traditional nursery program. The social and emotional development of each child is uppermost in the teachers' planning. When we look at these youngsters we can see that they are not the typical "preschool variety." These children tend to be lacking in self-concept, self-esteem, and self-control; they require discipline, consistent handling, and structure. To gain the children's attention and confidence, we provide a comfortable environment in which they are free to explore within the accepted routine. In order to avoid random play and impulsive and aggressive behavior, many limits are established.

Classroom time is only part of the real time the teachers spend in this program. We feel it is essential to have a well planned day and to have the room prepared for the children before they arrive.

Children are free to select their own activities. However, we ask them to keep large blocks and mobile equipment in specific areas and not to bring them across designated lines. They are also reminded that they must share and take turns with available equipment. Once rules and routine are established, we are consistent about enforcing them.

We find that a great deal of teacher-pupil interaction is necessary in working with disadvantaged children. The teacher can take cues from the children, but she often has to be the instigator of new ideas--especially in role play. At the beginning of the year, we find it necessary to reduce the amount of materials available, so that the children are less distracted by outside stimuli. The class is then slowly introduced to new materials. Activities planned for the day generally tie into the unit theme in order to make them more meaningful to the child. There are many activities planned to interest all the children in a variety of ways. Since the children are free to make individual choices, they maintain a high degree of interest in the activities they choose.

Since the children will be going into a large group situation in the school years ahead, we provide an opportunity for group experiences at the beginning of each day (circle time). This is the most highly structured period of the day. The children are required to remain in their chairs throughout this period (1/2 hr.). During this time the teachers introduce unit-related materials, read stories, present music and rhythm experiences, work with puppets, and emphasize counting, colors, shapes, facial features, body parts, and other such "cognitive" goals. There are times when a child is not able to contain himself during our circle time activities. When this happens, we may remove him from the circle and give him the opportunity to find a quiet activity. This will keep him involved, and he will not disturb or distract other children.

There is a great deal of flexibility in our program, and a great deal of attention given to each child. The teachers can extend and develop a child's knowledge about a subject, depending on his particular need or interest at the time. There is also flexibility concerning the planning for the day. When a teacher feels the children are restless or not interested or not comprehending, she can quickly make a substitute plan. A well planned program is essential, but there is also room for the intuitive decisions of the teacher. We can and do change course in midstream. The plans are formulated on a day-to-day basis, since the plan for one day depends on the successes and failures of the day before. Just as important as the planning is the evaluation immediately following each day. During the evaluation each child is discussed and his individual needs identified.

Responses are not demanded in this program, but there is much verbal interaction. At the beginning of the year, the teachers must initiate any and all conversation. As the children begin to talk on their own initiative, the teachers reinforce them. Eventually there is a great deal of lively and spontaneous conversation not only between teacher and child but also among

children. A situation like this is ideal for this type of program since it is basically one in which the teachers take the cues from the children. Obviously the teacher can tune in to the child's needs more easily if the child feels free to express them.

Many mothers seem vitally interested in the education and well-being of their youngsters. However, with regard to the mothers we have had contact with during the past three years, through our home visits, a high percentage simply do not know what to teach their children nor how to go about it. They are not accustomed to reading to their children, pointing things out, or doing the many other little things we so often expect a mother naturally to do. Therefore the home visit is a very important part of our program. We try to involve the mother (and even siblings) as much as possible. Often we discuss activities the mother can do on her own with her child. We also show the mother examples of inexpensive materials she can buy and sometimes work with her to make similar playthings with materials she has at home. We feel strongly that the home visits have been essential to the success of this program.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the unit-based program is to supply preschoolers with the necessary educational and social skills to adapt readily to a kindergarten curriculum.

What we look for in the child's development:

1. Sustained attention
2. Ability to stick to a task for increasingly long periods
3. Positive interaction with peers and teachers
4. Ability to use sentences in conversation
5. Positive attitude toward school
6. Impulse control
7. Good manners
8. Sense of well-being
9. Feelings of accomplishment

PROBLEMS AND INNOVATIONS DURING THE FIRST MONTH

We found that it was next to impossible to take our cues from the children at the beginning of the year. The children showed very little interest even in using the building blocks, paste, crayons, scissors, doll houses, etc. We found that it was necessary to show them ways to use the many available materials. We divided the children into small groups before Juice Time in order to show them how to play with the variety of materials. We also found that the room was too stimulating with all the materials in

full view, so we removed a majority of the toys and tools; slowly, we reintroduced them.

The transition periods were very difficult for the children. It was hard for them to move from one activity to another once a game or task had caught their attention, so we changed our routine and schedule for the day by combining Music Time and Circle Time. We also added a story or a directed activity to Juice Time. These changes eliminated the difficulty of moving bodily from one activity area to another. The juice period was left to the end of the day, with outdoor play following.

DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00 a.m. - Circle Time and Music Time
9:45 a.m. - Discovery Time (free play) and Cleanup
10:30 a.m. - Group Time (story or directed activity and juice)
10:45 a.m. - Outdoor Time
11:00 a.m. - Dismissal

ACTIVITY AREAS

Housekeeping Area (dolls, kitchen utensils, dressup clothes)
Large Motor Area
Quiet Table (small blocks, books, tinkertoys, matching games, etc.)
Art Area

September 30-October 3
(first week of school)

GOALS

1. Learning names
2. Learning symbols
3. Learning routine for day
4. Learning body parts
5. Learning to listen to stories
6. Establishing limits
7. Acquainting children with school environment

Games for First Week

1. Roll Ball (Call Ball)
2. Jack Be Nimble
3. Do What I Do

Stories for First Week--Flannel Board

1. From Our Kindergarten Book
   "The Three Bears" set to music
2. "The Three Bears"
3. "Three Billy Goats Gruff"
4. "The Three Little Pigs"

Songs for First Week

1. "Open, Shut Them"
2. "Where is_____?"
3. "Let Everyone Clap Hands"
4. "Hey, Everybody Touch Your Head"
5. "Happy Birthday"

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GOALS

Learning Names

The first day of school is usually a frightening experience for the majority of our three-year olds; therefore we felt it necessary to make the children feel at home by acquainting them with one another as soon as possible. The children can quickly gain a great deal of security by having others identify them by name.

During the week, we used every opportunity possible to emphasize the use of names. As the children got off the bus, we called each child by name, and as the children entered the room, we were always present to welcome them with a friendly smile. Later, during Circle Time, and again during Juice Time, we introduced the children individually. During the day we used their names frequently. We also introduced the children to one another during free time and gave them opportunities to play with one another in groups.

At the beginning of the week, a couple of children did not recognize their own names when they were called, but by the end of the week, they did. We made a game of this activity by covering our mouths as we quietly called the child's name, so that the children had to listen very intently. "Jack Be Nimble" and "Call Ball" are excellent games and songs for learning names. The children are delighted to hear their own names being called. They also enjoy looking for the child whose name is called in the song "Where is _____?" In the game "Call Ball," a child catches the ball and then names another child in the group to be the receiver.

When the children were on the school bus going home, we had an excellent opportunity to talk about whose house was next, again emphasizing the use of names.

Learning Symbols

On the first day of school each child was assigned a "symbol" such as an airplane, a dog, a circle, etc. cut from construction paper. This symbol was pasted on the child's chair, on his cubby, and on anything else in the classroom that he should be able to identify as his. Each symbol is distinct and simple enough for quick identification. The children learned to identify their symbols quite readily and adapted quickly to the idea of having symbols for purposes of identification.

The symbols give the children a sense of security and belonging and make routine functions such as hanging up coats and finding a chair go very fast and smoothly. They are small and easy to handle, and the children are usually able to tell what a symbol depicts even the first time they see it, so we soon began asking, "Whose picture is the dog?"

The symbols are also used in transition times, when the children move from area to area. Two or three symbols are held up, and as a child recognizes his, he goes with the teacher to the art table, housekeeping area, etc.

Learning the Daily Routine

The day is divided into five segments: Circle and Music Time, Discovery Time (free time) and Cleanup, Story Time or Directed Activity, Juice Time, and Outdoor Time.

On the first day of school, the children were introduced to the routine for the day while they were on the bus. They were told to go into the school room, hang up their wraps, use the bathroom facilities, and find their chair for Circle Time. With the four-year-olds as leaders, the younger children soon learned to follow this procedure.

The children are asked to remain seated during Circle Time. During the first week, only one child seemed unable to cope with this part of the routine, but he was able to go to the quiet area to look at books. Later he wanted to rejoin the group, and he has been able to stay seated during Circle Time ever since. Circle Time is the most structured part of the day. This is the time when we work on the themes and concepts which make up the "intellectual" component of the curriculum, such as learning body parts and categories (foods, furniture, etc.) and identifying shapes.

After Circle Time, the children are asked which area they would like to go to for Discovery Time. Each one is asked individually; then he is told to pick up his chair and take it to the table or area he has chosen. The children usually follow their plans though they are not forced to. During Discovery Time, the children may choose from among many activities; they return the toys and games to the shelves when they are finished using them.

A signal on the piano is given to indicate Cleanup Time. The children have to be encouraged to return everything to specific places in the room. In each area, pictures and examples of objects from that area are attached to flannel boards, helping to make this task easier for the children. A paper hat is sometimes given to the best helper.

After Cleanup, the children are told that we will have juice as soon as everyone is sitting quietly at his table. Books are put out on the tables to give the children a quiet period in which to get settled. Sometimes we read a story. At other times a directed activity, such as coloring, pasting or matching, is planned for this period.

During Juice Time, the children take turns passing napkins, cups and cookies. Each child pours his own juice. The children are asked to throw away their cups and napkins when finished and return to their seats. Then they go to the bathroom, put on their wraps, and sit in their cubbies waiting to go out to the playground.

Part of the routine during Juice Time is to wait until all children are served before starting to eat. This was very difficult for one of the children to comprehend. He would grab fistful of cookies, gulp down his juice and pay no attention to reminders by the teacher. He went without juice for one day, and the next day the problem was eliminated.

Learning Body Parts

The identification of body parts is such a vital concept that we did no more than introduce it during the first week of school. Later, we can be more specific.

This week many of the names of body parts were introduced by talking about them, pointing to them and emphasizing them through various songs and games. The first day we talked about our hands and fingers. We teachers wiggled our fingers and asked children to imitate us. The response was not too good the first day because the children were somewhat frightened, the whole situation being so new to them, especially the three-year-olds. The "Open, Shut Them" song was picked up by the children fairly quickly. The words are so simple, and their fingers add the action to the song.

Facial features were also discussed this week. From a practical point of view, it was necessary for the children to become aware of the relative position of eyes, nose and mouth since this is crucial to making pumpkins and masks for Halloween. When we began talking about facial features, most children were able to point to their eyes, nose, mouth and ears. The body parts were then emphasized in songs and in the "Do What I Do" game. The response from the children has been good; now we can start to talk about the relative positions of these features.

Learning to Listen to Stories

Learning to listen is a most essential initial step in the reading readiness program in our curriculum. For the children to have an interest in words, stories, sequence, and imagination, they must first develop the ability to listen. We knew from past experience that the children would not be able to sustain their attention for long. We also knew that the first step for maintaining attention was through the use of flannel board stories. The children are usually fascinated by the introduction of the bright, colorful figures as the teacher relates the story. The teacher can help to dramatize the story through the tone and tempo of her speech; she can modulate her voice and use gestures for characterization. She can also ask "What's going to happen next?" "What does she have in her hand?" "Who is knocking at the door?"

Establishing Limits

The children are quite free during their day at school, but there are several limits within which they function. First is the daily routine. We begin each morning with our Circle Time music. The chairs are placed in the circle before the children arrive, and when they come, they are expected to remove their coats and sit in their chairs for the duration of the activities presented during this period. Responses are encouraged, but not required. The only alternative during this time is looking at books in the quiet area. This choice is offered to the child only when he feels he cannot contain himself and remain in the circle.

After Circle Time is over, each child is expected to take his own chair and place it at the table in the play area he has chosen to go to for Discovery Time. The children were confused about this initially, and one of us had to send the children over to the tables individually while the other showed them where to put their chairs. By the end of the first week the children had caught on to this routine, but they still need to be encouraged.

An important limit for Discovery Time is the specification of play areas. The large motor area has a visible boundary--a red line made from mystic tape--that is vital to our classroom structure. The first day we talked about how this line was the furthest limit for large trucks and large blocks. The main reason for this limit is that these very large playthings must be contained in one area to prevent them from getting underfoot and disrupting the play in other areas. Also, being together in a bounded area seems to encourage interaction between the children. The children, as yet, do not fully grasp the idea behind the boundary line, so this has to be reinforced through a variety of techniques. Often when a truck strays over the line, one of us "drives" it back and points out the line to the child. Or, when a child is building close to the line, we suggest that he build further back so he does not go over the line. So far, by using this line, we have avoided many problems that arise from having large equipment all over the room. This was about the extent of setting limits for the first week. Other problems, such as fighting, will be coming up, but the children are still so new and shy that it will take some time for these things to develop.

There are some limits that are set for outdoor play. These are strictly enforced because they are safety precautions and include playing on the grass rather than the driveway and allowing only one child on the slide at a time. Also, sand stays in the areas designated for sand.

Acquainting Children with the School Environment

To familiarize the children with toys and games in the room, we introduced a few toys during Circle Time. We showed the children how to

use them and how to return them to their proper places on the shelves.

The various areas in the room were pointed out and a trip around the room was taken. The children were then asked which area they would like to go to for free-play time.

For the first week of school, we did not put out very many toys because we thought it best to eliminate as many distractions as possible. We also spent a great deal of time showing the children how to paste, color, etc., because these children generally do not have these materials in their homes.

October 6-10

GOALS

1. Continue names
2. " symbols
3. " body parts
4. " listening to stories
5. " following routine
6. Introduce Fall unit

Names

We continued to emphasize names through the songs, "Good Morning to ____" or "Where is ____?," and to use names often. The children were frequently asked questions about each other: "Whose chair is this?" "Who has on a yellow blouse today?" Games were also used--Roll Ball is an excellent game to play with emphasis on names; the children take turns being the leader. Names were also used as the children left the bus individually and as they were dismissed for outdoor play. Frequently we questioned the children about other children to eliminate pointing to one another. The children did begin to call each other by name this week and were praised for this accomplishment.

The children are able to identify their symbols, chairs, and cubbies, although some need help occasionally. During Circle Time, individual symbols were held up, and the children were asked to identify their own symbols; occasionally a symbol was held up indicating to a child it was his turn to be dismissed. Sometimes just the name of the symbol was used.

Routine

Some of the children were still not sure of the routine this week and had to be continually reminded of it. Rules and limits have to be well established, no exceptions permitted. The children will be testing us frequently.

John was a problem child at the beginning of this week. He decided he wasn't going to sit still for one minute during Circle Time, so he crawled under the chair, yelling to everyone, "Look at me." The children and teachers ignored this negative behavior. Then he started to run to other areas of the room, but he was blocked or brought back to his seat each time; eventually he was sent to his cubby. After awhile in his cubby he asked to join the group. The next day he was told he would be given a piece of candy if he remained in his seat during Circle Time. That day everyone including John received a treat. The same routine was followed the next day, and since then John has remained in his seat every day even without positive reinforcement.

John also decided to test the rules concerning proper behavior during Juice Time--he grabbed a cookie and ate it down in one gulp before others had been served. He was immediately removed to another quiet area in the room and received no juice that day. The next day he was told that as soon as we all finished the song, "Open, Shut Them" we would all have juice and cookies together. He waited, and he has been very cooperative ever since. I believe the auditory cue (song) has helped his impulse control.

Stories

The children enjoyed the flannel board stories. They were able to follow the stories quite well and even answer a few questions about them: "What is going to happen next?" "What is the girl's name?" "Who was in bed?" "Where did grandmother go?" "What does Red Riding Hood have in her basket?" "What was the name of the girl in the story we read last week about the three bears?"

Environment

The children are still getting acquainted with school environment and with one another although there was much more interaction between the children this week; they were building together, talking to one another on the telephones, etc. The four-year-olds are the leaders and have been most helpful reminding new children when it is time to clean up, where to hang up their coats, when it is juice and cookie time.

We still kept the number of toys and activities down to a minimum, introducing new activities gradually. The children did, however, request paste and crayons this week, so we provided these supplies for them at the art table, since they had shown a strong interest in them.

Cutting is very difficult for three-year-olds, but one child, Janice, exhibited a great deal of determination and was able to cut out several leaves. Others, like Brian, just ripped papers in half. Because these children were terribly frustrated we supplied an easier cutting task--cutting paper strips--in order to help them regain their self-confidence.

Beginning a New Unit: Fall

We started our new unit on Fall. For the duration of a unit, we try to key in as much as possible to the central theme through stories, art activities, songs, pictures, etc. Using Fall as the first unit seemed natural since by its nature, Fall makes children more aware of their environment--one of our goals running through the entire year.

The first day we talked about leaves--how they change and fall to the ground and what colors they turn: red, yellow, brown, orange--using pictures of trees and flannel board pictures of leaves. The children listened, but their responses were few; they couldn't identify colors by name but are able to match them.

The weather was very pleasant all week, and we were able to implement our new unit with a couple of little field trips. Short ones are good at this time; we build up to longer ones later in the year.

During the course of the week we offered numerous activities relating particularly to leaves, such as coloring ditto sheet pictures of leaves.

The Story of F. G.

Our children are such individuals that it is quite difficult to generalize about the group as a whole. F. G., for example, is a new three-year-old boy in the program. From our first encounter with him, we anticipated some difficulties but not to the extent that they occurred. First, F. G. refused to come to school, and this continued for a week. We rode the bus hoping to coax him on, but he screamed, cried, squirmed, and wrestled with anyone who touched him. All the while he got deep sympathy from his mother who gave up the first day saying, "You had better get someone else for school; F. does not want to go."

During this first week, one of us stopped at his home and discussed the school with Mrs. G. who finally decided to place F. on the bus the following morning. However, when he started to cry and scream again his mother took him off the bus to console and keep him home.

At the beginning of the second week, the preschool supervisor went to talk with Mrs. G. and offered to pick up F. G. and Mrs. G. the following morning and bring them both to school. The supervisor assured Mrs. G. that once F. got to school and got involved in the activities he would be fine.

All of this came to pass. Once F. got to school a couple of our most extroverted kids unknowingly helped the situation by coming over and talking with him, and one of us spent a good part of the morning with him. However, when mother left the room in the latter part of the session, little F. G. went tagging along after her like a little duckling after a mother duck. Significantly, though, he did agree to go home on the bus that morning.

The next morning it had been arranged that F. would be picked up by the supervisor in her car, but this time without his mother. There was some crying and squirming, but he did come with the supervisor. Once in school, though shy, he was easily persuaded to take out some cars and play with them. He did not want to hang up his coat, however, although he walked over to the cubby and pointed out his hook. He seemed to need his coat as something to latch on to until he felt comfortable in his new situation.

By Wednesday, F. didn't cry at all when he got on the bus. At school he kept his jacket on, but he did join the circle and sat quietly. The rest of the morning turned out to be something close to fantastic. He worked in the art area for at least an hour, and, midway through the morning, he decided to hang up his jacket. After that he very readily followed the routine of Juice Time and outside play and appeared to be having a good time.

The following day he broke through with a smile upon entering the bus. In school, he began to participate a little in Circle Time. He is an extremely verbal child when he begins to talk and is apparently used to pointing out objects, identifying and describing them. All through the morning he seemed to be in command of his area; he remembered where blocks, puppets, etc. came from and led the way in Cleanup. An interesting episode occurred at Juice Time: we were working on a directed activity in

which the children were coloring an appl ·ed. F. said he didn't want to color; he wanted to draw. We told him h could draw on the back of his paper after he colored his apple red. At this, he said he wasn't going to work on the sheet or sit at the table, so he crawled under it. The teacher ignored this behavior and continued explaining the project to the other children, so F. bit the leg of the child closest to him under the table. The teacher picked him up and set him firmly in his chair. After testing and finding these limits firmly set, F. did his work sheet without a further comment.

Nothing unusual happened on Friday. It appears that all is finally well with F.G.!

October 13-17

GOALS

1. Introduce unit on Halloween
2. Introduce unit on apples
3. Concentrate on facial features

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Halloween Unit

We decided to introduce the unit on Halloween this week, because we wanted to be sure the children had an opportunity to see the pumpkins growing in the fields. We planned a trip to the pumpkin patch for Friday, devoting time during the early part of the week to discussions about Halloween and pumpkins. The children were given many opportunities to see pictures of pumpkins, use flannel pumpkin cut-outs, color pumpkins, compare pumpkins with other fruits and vegetables, color and paste facial features on Jack-O-Lanterns, etc. We talked about the color of pumpkins and found other things in the room that were the same color. We also discussed the weights of pumpkins (little ones are light and easy to pick up; big ones are heavy and difficult to pick up). On the way to the pumpkin patch we discussed what we would see when we arrived--pumpkins growing on vines. The children helped pick out five pumpkins, and back in the classroom we discussed how we could make Jack-O-Lanterns out of them--"What can we do to the pumpkins to make them Jack-O-Lanterns?" "Put candles in them!" "How can we get inside pumpkin to put the candle in it?" "Cut it."

Facial Features

Facial features is an important concept related to Halloween masks and Jack-O-Lantern faces. During the first week of school we did such activities as "point to your eyes," which most of the children were able to do. The main difficulty seemed to be in the relative positioning of eyes, nose, mouth. The children could point out their own facial features with relative ease, but given a blank face they had difficulty placing the features in the correct position. Here are some of the activities we used to establish this concept:

1. We talked about the eyes, nose, mouth, ears on pictures of people. We did this primarily in Circle Time but also during Discovery Time, pointing out pictures of faces in the books the children were looking at.

2. We sang songs that dealt with body concepts--"Point to your eyes," "Put your hand on your nose," "Touch your mouth," etc. (Activities done in Circle Time are considered a success if we get 50% participation.)

3. We drew faces on coloring sheets.

4. We played "Simon Says."

Dramatic Play

The four-year-olds are definitely the leaders in the group, but the three-year-olds began to exhibit signs of independence this week. Greg and John played together with blocks, pretending they were soldiers.

David, a four-year-old, started many activities this week with structures he built. One day he put hollow blocks in the middle of a road he had constructed and called them quicksand. Another day he built a motorcycle including most of the parts. He also organized several children as fire fighters; they took turns putting out fires using a board as a hose and making a hissing noise to imitate the water rushing through the hose. He also started children on building activities using small blocks as hammers; many children enjoyed being carpenters that day. Another day, David put hollow blocks over his feet and arms and pretended he was a robot. Several other children joined him, and later the teacher directed the activity by giving signals to the robots--"Go to shelf with these boards. Put them on top shelf."

The Socialization of Lisa

Lisa has been in our program for two years and has had problems controlling her feelings. Some days Lisa has not been able to associate with other children at all because she would start crying because of some frustration like someone bumping into her. She would also withdraw from the group and just sit; it was impossible to get any response from her at all when she decided to sulk. At one time she was given too much attention during these periods. Later this behavior was ignored as much as possible, and Lisa was removed to the quiet corner until she was ready to rejoin the group.

We have noticed that Lisa is not crying as much this year, and when she does, it is for a much shorter time. One day John pulled a toy away from Lisa eliciting a loud retort from her. The teacher told John that he could play with the toy next, and that he should ask Lisa for it. He did, whereupon the teacher asked Lisa to stop crying; she did, and was praised. "Lisa is older now, and she doesn't cry anymore, do you Lisa?" Lisa shook her head.

October 20-24

GOALS

1. Introduce unit on apples
2. Continue with body parts
3. Introduce colors:
   - red
   - orange
   - yellow
   - brown
4. Continue with Halloween activities

Apple Unit

Most of the activities in the classroom this week revolved around the identification and characteristics of apples. The children saw and touched real apples growing on trees at the apple orchard and saw, touched, cut, peeled, cooked and ate them at school. They also played with artificial apples and had fun identifying apples during games. A favorite game was "What's Missing?" using apples and pumpkins hidden under a hat and asking the children to tell which one was hidden.

The children made apple sauce in class and on subsequent days were encouraged to pretend that they were fixing it in the housekeeping area. In the large block area some of the children used apples in their trucks and transported them to market. Many children made apples out of clay, play dough, art foam, etc. They also pasted apples on trees, used flannel board cut-outs of trees and apples and matched apple shapes to outlines of apples.

Child-Initiated Activities

The children initiated many activities this week which kept them involved for longer periods of time than usual. Several worked with clay: they rolled it, patted it, squeezed it, pounded it, and made snakes, fish, balls, heads, arms, legs. They were very enthusiastic over the results. We also gave them play dough, due to their high interest in the clay projects.

There were also many unique structures built in the large block area this week. Michael and David were the originators of these complicated structures, but they did involve the other children, producing a great deal of interaction.

October 27-31

SUMMARY FOR OCTOBER

In the past month, we have noticed substantial gains in many areas. The children have grown emotionally--the initial crying, hitting, random actions, and frustrations are no longer visible. Some children still need help with impulse control, but there has been improvement. John, for example, an extremely hyperactive and impulsive child, has managed to settle down during Circle Time and remain in his seat for the entire twenty-minute period. He is also able to wait for his turn during Juice Time and does not eat before others have been served. He knows now that we all eat together after everyone has been served, and after we have sung "Open, Shut Them."

The routine for the day has been well established, and the children need very few reminders about what happens next. As they enter the room,

they find their cubbies, hang up their coats, use the bathroom, find their chairs for Circle Time and sit down. This period usually lasts twenty to thirty minutes (including the music) during which the children are attentive, but not as responsive as we eventually expect them to be. They imitate our actions in songs and stories, but they don't talk about what they're doing. They know "Open, Shut Them" the best, but Willie, Brian, Sharon, and Jackie still don't say the words. It is difficult for them to remember a series of words, and we are still working with the phrase, "Not by the hair of my Chinny, Chin-chin" from the "Three Little Pigs."

The children's attention span has increased--they are listening to stories with fewer props; and each child knows his own symbol as well as the symbols of his classmates. Most of them call their classmates by name although the three-year-olds find this a little more difficult, of course.

During Discovery Time the children are definitely getting more involved with each other. Willie, a four-year-old, has been virtually non-verbal and has had extreme difficulty getting involved with the other children. However, during the past week he has been quite actively playing with Eddie. He and Eddie like to take turns pushing each other on the large truck.

Michael and David are the construction workers in the large block area. They involve many other children in their projects and use a great deal of imagination in building their structures--castles, motorcycles, cars, trucks, swimming pools, garages, apartments. Their structures often reflect school activities. For example, if we have been reading "Three Billy Goat's Gruff" or "The Three Pigs" during Circle Time, they build a bridge for the Billy Goats and houses for the three pigs. There is a great deal of sharing, taking turns, helping each other and talking to one another during these projects.

We also have some busy little homemakers. Usually Sharon, Anna, Janice, Andrea and Angela can be found in the housekeeping corner. Lisa likes this area, too, but she doesn't always interact with others. Anna is the leader and always attempts to interest others in her particular make-believe.

The children usually like to do an art project each day, but it is still very difficult for the three-year-olds to cut and paste. They know how to use paste, but they have a hard time pasting, cutting out and matching the cutout to a similar outline. It is necessary to turn the shape over to paste it, and this is hard for them to remember.

There are other areas in which the children are progressing. Along with simple table manners like "Please" and "Thank you," they are used to taking turns passing cups, napkins, and cookies. They are also able to pour their own juice. A few were hesitant and shaky at first, but they gained confidence as time went on, because when they spilled juice in their attempt to pour, no big fuss was made, and they were encouraged to try again.

Cleanup seems to be going very well. Several children are the leaders in this area, but just about every child does manage to put at least one

thing away. Jackie and John still seem to want to continue playing, but verbal encouragement to help clean up seems to be working to some extent.

Body parts, particularly facial features, were stressed this first month. On the whole, the children are very familiar with body concept words and the relative positions of particular features.

SUMMARY FOR OCTOBER

Individual Children

JANICE: At first, Janice had difficulty paying attention during Circle Time. Now she pays attention, gives many answers and is always eager to try new activities. She particularly enjoys the art table, and although she is only three, she can cut out shapes.

GREG: Greg was a loner, but David really helped bring him out of his shell. He is very active now in the large block area. His attention span has increased as well.

FRANKLIN: Frank still doesn't talk with the other children, but he does answer questions during Circle Time, and he frequently talks to the teachers.

JOHN: From being an extremely undisciplined child, John is managing some impulse control. He sits still during Circle Time and Juice Time. He no longer grabs cookies from others, but he still fights for toys he wants. He also has trouble sticking to one project for any length of time.

PERRY: Initially, Perry was very quiet, but now he is the leader in dramatic play activities. He takes roles, uses dressup clothes, interacts with others, imitates car noises and speech patterns. He enjoys all activities and sticks to projects.

SHARON R.: Sharon wanders a great deal, but she is able to maintain her span of attention for longer periods of time. However, very poor motor-coordination makes it difficult for her to paste and pour her own juice.

JACKIE: Jackie is easily distracted during Circle Time. She doesn't interact with other children to any extent but spends fairly long periods of time involved in various Quiet Table activities.

SHARON W.: Sharon spends most of her time by herself in the kitchen corner, but occasionally joins in group play. She doesn't seem to need as much adult physical reassurance as she needed before. During Circle Time she is beginning to sing and respond somewhat, but she still doesn't want to give up her security buggy.

BRIAN: Brian uses very little self-initiated speech but follows Terry's lead. He keeps himself occupied during Discovery Time, seeming to enjoy art the most. During Circle Time he likes "Simon Says."

DAVID: David was absent for a couple of weeks and very eager to return to school. Before his absence he was quite loud and definitely a leader in large motor-area. When he returned he began playing in the kitchen where he assumed a masculine role. He has made some original block structures--a swimming pool, and an apartment --and he eagerly participates during Circle Time.

WILLIE: Willie does not interact with or respond to the other children. Eddie has helped by asking Willie to push him in the truck. Willie can really sustain his attention by himself in quiet activities and can be constructive in things like Lego.

MICHAEL: The lead construction builder, Michael, builds, expands, and readily explains what he is doing, and he sticks to his task for the whole period. He is beginning to verbalize and interact with the other children.

EDDIE: Still somewhat distractable, Eddie doesn't usually stick to an activity for very long. He tries to be helpful to younger children and responds eagerly in Circle Time. He is less hyperactive than previously.

LISA: Lisa's crying episodes have diminished. She interacts with other children and enjoys almost mothering the three-year-olds. She is still unable to control her emotions, and her moods fluctuate extremely.

ANNA: Definitely the leader of the girls, Anna is very sociable and wants to involve other children; she seems to have the ability to do this. She is very observant and picks up cues quickly.

ANDREA: Andrea is much more verbal than she was at first and loves to dress up. She is able to follow through on an activity and

sequence things very well, always seeming to have a plan. Her fine motor coordination is a little weak. She doesn't always listen, but is most eager to participate.

ANGELA: More verbal than she was at the beginning, Angela carries through on things. She doesn't interact as much as her twin sister Andrea does but is more independent and stubborn. The twins don't play together a whole lot, but invariably play in the same area.

November 3-7

GOALS

1. Introduce unit on foods

2. Continue with shapes:
   matching
   stringing
   cutting
   pasting
   drawing
   identifying

3. Act out "The Three Pigs" and repeat phrases

During our Circle Time this week we concentrated on three main themes: shapes, dramatization of a story, and foods.

Shapes

We worked with circles, triangles, and squares. We introduced these shapes using the flannel board and cutouts of several sizes and colors of each shape. We expected the children to be able to identify these shapes by name. Another activity was matching Peabody pictures with the flannel cut-outs. We also put all the flannel shapes randomly upon the board and had the child put all the shapes that were alike together. The children counted the shapes, too.

When we handed out a shape to each child and then asked, "Who has a square?" there was no response. So we backtracked, gave everyone a circle, and played a Simon Says--"Put the circle over your head," etc. This they were able to do. (Note: the lack of response in the first game was not because the children didn't know the names of the shapes; apparently it's due to their failure to listen and follow directions.)

The Three Pigs

Our second main theme in Circle Time this week was the dramatization of part of "The Three Pigs." We tried using the large cardboard standups of the three pigs, but the children didn't seem to know what to say. When we read the story again we concentrated on one line--"Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin." By the end of the week, they were learning the sentences fairly well.

We also used "The Three Pigs" on home visits so that each child had an opportunity to retell the story sequence. We also used "The Three Pigs" puzzle and individual flannel boards.

Foods

Foods was our third main theme. Because of our trip to the apple orchard, the apple was a natural starting place and made it easier to introduce other common fruits. We used the Peabody pictures, matching them to artificial fruits. We also played a game, using two apples and one banana: we put them all under a hat, removed one and then asked the children to tell what was left. We also showed pictures of two children in the grocery store buying foods and asked the boys and girls to identify the foods. The books we read were The Apple Book, and What Is for Breakfast.

The children used artificial foods and cardboard pictures of foods in their play. They also cut pictures of foods out of magazines and pasted them onto construction paper and paper plates to make collages. They were frequently asked to identify foods they were playing with and to tell how they were planning to prepare them. At first, it was difficult for them to identify things like a bowl of corn flakes, or meat loaf. Later, they were able to distinguish between eggs and fried eggs and between toast and plain bread. They enjoyed frosting cookies by themselves and eating apple pieces. Last week they seemed ready to eat stem, core and all, but this week they could identify these parts and put them aside.

Dramatic Play

During Discovery Time this week we noticed that the children initiated many activities that were directly related to the Circle Time activities. After reading "The Three Little Pigs," for example, the children built houses in the large block area and took turns acting out the part of the big bad wolf by blowing the houses down. Occasionally a child would suggest to his friend that he build another house next to his. There was a great deal of cooperative play during the building period.

The children also became interested in playing store this week. They took turns being cashier and buying with play money. They put their "groceries" in wagons, wheeled the wagons to the housekeeping area, and put the food away in cupboards.

November 17-24

GOALS

1. Continue food activities
2. Begin Thanksgiving unit
3. Continue counting activities
4. Emphasize colors--red, yellow, blue, green

Thanksgiving

We began the Thanksgiving unit by showing pictures of turkeys and discussing the various attributes of said winged creature: it is a bird; it has feathers, a head, eyes, feet, beak, and toes. After this, the children were able to pick out the turkey picture from among several pictures of different birds.

Since we felt that the historical background of Thanksgiving would have little meaning for children, we more or less neglected it. Instead we concentrated on tangibles like food and art activities like hand turkeys: spread out your fingers, trace your hand, make your thumb the head and fingers the feathers, just add feet and imagination and presto! A ready-made bird! We colored turkeys, talking about the colors in a real turkey. Another opportunity for discussing colors arose when we pasted real feathers of green, rust, gold, and orange on a precut construction-paper turkey. The children also painted paper plates brown, stapled on head and feet, and pasted on real feathers. Spatter-screen paintings of turkeys were also made.

"Gobble, Gobble Turkey" was the only turkey song we sang: we felt that if we only sang one song, the frequent repetition of the words would result in greater participation.

Colors

We worked on the identification of the colors red, yellow, green and blue. We played color games using the Yogi Bears--three-dimensional 8" plastic bears. The children matched similar colored bears, found certain colored bears hidden in the large motor area, and remembered which colored bears were hidden under a blanket.

Numbers

The Yogi Bears were also helpful in introducing number concepts this week. We asked the children to find a specific number of hidden Yogi Bears or to pick out a certain number from the whole group. We also counted shapes and turkeys.

Our home visits centered around counting exercises, using flannel boards, cutouts, counting books, objects in the room, and counting flash cards.

November 10-14

GOALS

1. Continue unit on foods

   a. make jello, pudding, Rice Krispie squares, cookies, marshmallow sandwiches
   b. set up store--use a variety of foods

2. Stress listening activities

Foods

To continue our unit on foods we followed a few simple recipes this week. We had the children help make jello, pudding, marshmallow sandwiches and Rice Krispie squares. The children saw the jello and the pudding harden (by using ice cubes). They also enjoyed using a knife to spread the marshmallow fluff (which was very sticky) on graham crackers. We melted miniature marshmallows to help make the Rice Krispies stick together for Rice Krispie squares. What the children helped make during Discovery Time was later consumed by one and all during Juice Time. Usually the children were able to recall the recipes later.

We used a number of Peabody and magazine pictures of foods during Circle Time. The children were enthusiastic about identifying foods they knew.

We also played food games to reinforce food identification. We played relay games--pass the banana to the person behind you--walkie-talkie--go to the store, pick up one apple and bring it to me--and guessing games--what foods did teacher put under the towel and which one did she take away. The children also used foods in the store and housekeeping areas. Food puzzles, coloring sheets and magazine pictures were available for tracing, coloring, cutting and pasting.

To tie in our unit on foods with listening activities, we read a story about the supermarket, which gave birth to a discussion about various items that might be purchased at the supermarket.

Listening Activities

We used the record "The Little Engine That Could" as our primary listening activity for the week. First we looked at the picture book briefly. The next day we showed the pictures and played the record simultaneously. The third day we showed the pictures and just played the songs, helping the children to repeat some of their favorite phrases from the song "I think I Can." The next day we asked the children to help us tell the story just from looking at the pictures. We then played the song again and acted out the parts--train trying to get up mountain, its wheels moving slowly. We used the clown mask to help act out the part of Bogo. By the end of the week, the children had become quite familiar with the story and were beginning to repeat phrases they knew.

We noticed that the record of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush" was too fast for the children, so we sang it for them ourselves. At first, they repeated only the actions. Later, when we used action cards (such as a picture of a lady sweeping the floor) as clues, they were able to sing the words with more confidence while performing the actions.

Painting

We started some painting this week during Discovery Time, hoping to teach the children to paint a picture and not just paint the entire sheet of paper. With much encouragement from the teachers and many questions about what they would like to make, the children were able to make some interesting pictures--a house, a pig, a man, a face. They discovered the many things that they could do with a paint brush. They also enjoyed using different colors and trading colors with each other.

John

We felt that John made big gains this week. He is beginning to calm down and stick to activities for much longer periods of time. One day, he and Lisa were both playing with doll houses, doll furniture and rubber people. They talked to each other about what the dolls were doing and compared them to similar people at home--"My Daddy has a chair like that at home." "So does mine." Later, John decided he needed beds, so he took six small unit blocks (the perfect size) and, before going on to another activity, put each of the six rubber people to bed.

December 1-5

GOALS

1. Work on number concepts and counting to ten
2. Develop eye-hand coordination
3. Review and follow "body concept" record
4. Introduce the Christmas song, "Jingle Bells"
5. Make pudding, jello, and apple crunch

Counting

During Circle Time each day this week, we did a counting activity. We counted flannel-board shapes and animal figures, played "Hold the square over your head," "Put the square under your chair," "Hold up two squares." We asked such questions as, "Can you hand me two birds and one fish?" "Which row has more in it, the bird row or the fish row?" During Discovery Time we put out counting frames and flannel board shapes. We also made chains.

Body Parts

Body parts were reintroduced this week for review. We played the body concept record, to which the majority of the children responded enthusiastically. They also learned the poem, "Heads, shoulders, knees and toes."

Jingle Bells

"Jingle Bells" was introduced, but the children showed very little interest at first. When we gave bells to the children to shake, things went much better. We also found that the record went a little too fast, and the children performed much better following the teachers' lead.

Foods

We made pudding, jello, apple crunch and chocolate marshmallow cookies. The children actively helped prepare these foods and enjoyed watching the changes that occured. They also used play dough to make cookies and other foods for "baking."

Emotional Growth of the Children

Lisa Ratliff is a complex child of changeable moods and erratic behavior. During Circle Time one day she was completely withdrawn and very unresponsive to all activities presented. She wouldn't sing or play the chip game with her classmates. Later in the day, however, she played blocks with David and Eddie; there was a great deal of conversation and happy laughter among them. (All boys terrified her last year.) Other days her mood is much better during Circle Time: she sings, volunteers to answer questions and participates in games.

She is beginning to put on her own clothing now, too, while before she just stood and waited for help. Her coat is extremely difficult to button, snap and hook, but she puts her ski pants and hat on all by herself.

We have noticed that she likes to "mother" the younger children in the class. We have encouraged this interaction because we feel it helps build her self-confidence.

Although I think we can correctly say that all of the children have grown in recent weeks, the growth in some is far more evident than in others. Willie, Brian, Greg, and Franklin show very little enthusiasm, especially during Circle Time, and Willie and Brian are non-verbal all day long. Greg simply doesn't like Circle Time so he doesn't participate too often.

Franklin is a special case. Occasionally he appears to be trying to do the motions of a poem, but he very seldom tries to voice the words. Recently he has started to babble somewhat during Circle Time. We may show something and he will say, "I have one of those..." or some such phrase, but he doesn't really participate. Sometimes he seems quite removed from the situation, like the king in another world. For example, we have a red tape line separating the large motor area from the rest of the room. All of the children recognize that this line is the limit--large trucks, blocks, etc. cannot cross over. Franklin, however, still does not grasp this concept and continually drives his truck as if the red line does not exist. We have pointed out the line to him and talked to him about it many times, but he just looks at us without a glimmer of understanding. Another example: at the beginning of Juice Time the teacher usually says, "Now that everyone has been served cookies and juice we can start eating." Invariably, however, Franklin asks, "Can I drink my juice now? Can I eat my cookie now?" He also asks the question several times while he is eating! One day, he asked 10 times during Juice Time if he could eat his cookie and drink his juice. We have tried a new technique which has been reasonably successful. When everyone has cookies and juice and the teacher tells them they may begin, she also says, "Franklin, you may eat your cookie and drink your juice now."

December 8-12, 15-19

GOALS

1. Continue Christmas unit--songs, art projects, stories

2. Encourage child-to-child interaction

3. Rhythm activities

Christmas Unit

We worked on the song "Jingle Bells" most of the week to see if the children could memorize the words. It was very slow in coming. We decided they were distracted by listening to the record or shaking bells; therefore, we would occasionally practice the words separately. We also introduced "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" and sang it daily during Juice Time.

There were a variety of art projects this week: bells (paper cups covered with foil); spatter painting bells; bell, circle and oblong shapes decorated for use on the Christmas tree; stand-up Christmas trees, lanterns and chains.

Children

Willie seemed particularly interested in art activities this week. He is extremely proud of his finished projects, and he has begun to ask if he can't do another one. These have been the first occasions when he has verbally expressed or requested anything. He also has been singing a little during Circle Time and attempting to clap in time to the "Drummer Boy" song.

John returned to school on Tuesday after being out for over two weeks. His father had abducted him, and his mother said he would probably be unruly upon his return to school. He was! It was just like his days in school at the beginning of the year--hyperactive, into everything, easily distracted with little or not attention span, uninhibited, demanding, and unsocial. He did not want to share toys, wait his turn or sit during Circle Time. With many reminders and limits, he settled down some toward the end of the week.

Michael is beginning to act up a lot more these days, and we are going to have to watch him. He is becoming a leader, and we are trying to find ways to guide him into more constructive activities--helping others, cleaning off tables, art activities and more cooperative play.

Franklin and Lisa are both becoming more involved with other children. They also enjoy playing with each other.

During the week of the Christmas party things were hectic, there was less classroom organization than usual and thus more frustration than usual on the part of the children. The high point was the Christmas tree. We went out to a farm to get it, made decorations for it, and had a grand Christmas party complete with a Santa Claus from the research staff.

January 5-9

GOALS

1. Review vacation experiences with children and encourage verbalization

2. Review body parts

3. Introduce new song, "Little Boy Blue"

4. Familiarize children with a few wild-animal names: elephant, tiger, giraffe, monkey, lion

5. Discuss winter activities

CIRCLE TIME

Vacation Experiences

The children were happy and excited about coming back to school. We spent a long time just talking about our Christmas vacation experiences. Everyone had something to relate except Brian. He is the only one who is totally nonverbal. He listens attentively, does action poems, and plays well with other children, but he does not talk.

Circus Unit

We will be doing a circus unit soon, so we read a few animal stories this week--Noah's Art, Animal ABC, and Wild and Woolly Animal Book. The four-year-olds knew the animal names and characteristics. We also played a game in which we described an animal and asked the children to guess its name. They were slow to catch on to this idea, but we will repeat it later.

Body Parts

Our review of body parts was done mainly by playing Body Concept records--"Toes and Fingers" and "Up, Up, Down."

Songs

It takes the children a long time to memorize a song; therefore, we decided to review songs that some of the four-year-olds knew from last year. Since we had the story and the record of "Little Boy Blue," we decided to introduce this song to the children. First we read the story and discussed the pictures and the objects in the pictures. Next we played the record, and finally, we acted out the song. They really enjoyed doing the actions, and some began to repeat the words.

"Hokey Pokey" is a good song for children to learn because the words are easy, the tune is simple and they eventually learn the directions right and left.

Winter

We looked at many pictures of winter scenes this week, and we discussed differences between winter and summer activities, clothing, and temperatures. The children played with winter standups, looked at books about winter and made snowmen using cotton.

DISCOVERY TIME

Children

During free time this week, there was a great deal of interaction among the children. Michael, David, and Greg made many unusual structures in the large block area--robots, tractors, airplanes, sleds, towers, tanks, racing cars, steam shovels, and motors. They were extremely proud of their structures and usually made sure someone knew exactly what they were building. They also managed to get other children interested in their activities.

Willie has been a particular problem this year because he has been reluctant to participate in classroom activities. He has been nonverbal most of the time and has never responded during Circle Time. However, there was a definite breakthrough this week. He became interested in working with the Peabody cards during free time, and with a great deal of positive reinforcement, competed with a couple other youngsters to name the objects before they did. He was extremely proud of himself and beamed from head to toe when he found he could do so. The next day during Circle Time, the same activity was repeated using the same Peabody cards, and Willie was enthusiastically calling out the card names. Willie suddenly gained a great deal of self-confidence. Later he went from Circle Time to the painting table with very little hesitation. (Previously he had been reluctant even to move during this transition period.)

Franklin is also beginning to communicate more. He and Greg did some building together, making towers standing side by side, watching them topple over, and quickly rebuilding them. (He still does not participate very much during Circle Time, though.)

Michael made an "up and down" road one day and eagerly joined the others with his truck. He is definitely not the loner that he was previously; he is talking to the others, although much of his talk is so irrelevant that it is quite difficult to comprehend.

January 12-16

GOALS

1. Winter unit--talk about winter weather, activities, and snowmen; make snowmen

2. Clothing and household items--use Peabody cards

3. Body concept--use "Up, Down" record

Winter Unit

Since we had a great deal of snow this week, it was an ideal time to compare winter and summer. During Circle Time we talked about wintertime being cold and summertime being hot, the clothing worn in the winter, and winter's snow and ice and the bare trees. We showed pictures and asked the children to tell us whether a picture was taker in winter or summer. Some of the children were beginning to comprehend the difference, but we still need to work on this concept.

The children did many art activities this week using snow and snowman themes--they made snowman faces out of cotton; snowmen out of three circles with felt scarves and hats and burlap brooms; stencil snowmen out of artificial snow and chalk pictures; and snow pictures using white paint.

The children acted out winter fun in the large motor area by pretending to slide on sleds; they lined up hollow blocks across the area and took turns moving themselves on their stomachs and backs or sitting up all the way across the room. They also used flat boards for skis and hollow blocks for skates.

Children

We noticed that John and Andrea have been doing a lot of role playing lately. Andrea is the mother, and John is her baby. She feeds him, puts him to bed, and takes him to the store with her. Occasionally when he's playing by himself or with other children, he suddenly stops to look for his "mommy," calling "Mommy, Mommy! Where are you?" Andrea answers him, and they start playing together again.

Peabody Pictures

Occasionally we use some of the Peabody picture cards because these pictures are above average in excellence. This week we decided to use the cards to concentrate on the kitchen area of the room, which would include various household items and articles of clothing. We began by using only the picture cards and asking the children to identify them. Later in the week we discussed each item--who would use it, and how it would be used. Finally we got the real articles and had the children match the pictures to the article. They seemed to enjoy all of these activities and did very well with them.

Body Concept

We continued working on body concept this week using a new record, "Up, Down." We listened to the record a number of times and then tried the actions sitting in our seats. After a couple of children demonstrated the complete actions we had all the children do it using their chairs as a reference point. We had a couple youngsters who were silly about it, but on the whole the participation was tremendous! Not only did they move along with the record and follow the actions, but many tried to sing along to what appeared to be rather catchy lyrics.

Our habitual non-participants, Willie and Brian, did not want to join in. To encourage them, we stood behind them and helped them to perform the actions. Brian was quite willing to go along with this arrangement, but Willie was much more resistant. However, when he became aware that we were not going to give up but were intent on helping him during the entire activity, he seemed to relax and let himself be manipulated.

We also played a couple of body-concept records we had used previously and were extremely pleased that the boys and girls remembered as many of the words and actions as they did.

Participation as a whole has been steadily improving.

January 19-23

GOALS

1. Circus unit--recognize and identify circus people and animals, sing circus songs, and read circus stories

2. Recognize and imitate action pictures

3. Follow simple directions

Imitation of Simple Actions

In preparation for our culminating activity in the circus unit--imitating various circus animals and circus activities--we introduced the imitation of simple actions using the Peabody action pictures depicting walking, waving, running, hopping, and skipping. First the children verbally identified the action seen in the picture; next they identified the action the teacher acted out for them; and finally they took turns performing an action for the rest of the children to guess.

Directions

We worked on left and right this week, using the song "Hokey, Pokey." To help the children identify their right and left hands, we gave each child a color chip to hold in his right hand; the left hand remained empty. Most of the four-year-olds could understand this, but the three-year-olds were confused. We will repeat this game from time to time during the rest of the year.

Painting

The children are beginning to do a lot more painting now. A few are in the scribble stage, the majority are in the shapes stage, and Janice and Willie are actually in the pictorial stage; they have painted for long periods of time making many different pictures. At first, some of the children used only one solid color. We have encouraged the children to share colors with one another, and more interesting color combinations are beginning to evolve.

Circus Unit

Since this is such a long and dreary part of the year, we have tried to spruce things up a bit by introducing the circus unit. This unit lends itself very easily to innumerable activities including decorating the classroom. We created a tent-like effect by stringing red and white streamers from the ceiling to the walls.

In this unit we expect the children to learn to 1) identify pictures and rubber figures of circus animals; 2) recognize an animal in different forms and group the animals (e.g., put all the lions together); 3) recognize the characteristics of each animal (e.g., an elephant is big and grey and has a trunk). We concentrated on the lion, tiger, bear, zebra, seal, giraffe, elephant, horse, and monkey. We read stories about the animals, used pictures, and made paper-bag masks of lions, tigers, and elephants. The

children took turns pretending to be one of these animals and assuming its characteristics. We also sang "Dancing Bear" in which everyone pretends he is a bear and turns around and around.

Following Simple Directions

This is not the first time we have done activities with this goal in mind, but it is the first time we have listed it as a single goal, thus emphasizing its importance. As simple as it may appear, it is often a difficult task for these children to do because it involves several steps. They must (1) listen to the command, (2) comprehend the task, (3) and have sufficient memory to carry it through.

One way of making this fun for the children is to use walkie-talkies. We have found that the children really love to use these instruments and seem to think they have a magical power.

We also use Peabody Action Cards--the children look at the card, perform the action that they see, and later tell us which action they did.

The children sometimes find the directed activities very difficult, perhaps because of their lack of impulse control. For example, one day our goal was to look at a mimeo snowman sheet and then color only his hat. Upon receiving the sheet, the children wanted to grab the crayons and scribble all over the whole sheet, so we had to proceed step by step: "It's not time for crayons yet. Let's look at the snowman. Let's look at his eyes, and his scarf. Today we are going to color only the snowman's hat--point to his hat. All right, let's take a crayon and color it--remember, only his hat." Many youngsters still could not stop and wanted to color all over.

January 26-30
February 1-14

The grouping of the children at tables for Juice Time was changed randomly at mid-year so the children would not become dependent on one teacher. Also, such a change encourages socialization.

Individual Children

Our goal for these two weeks was to look at individual children. We decided to consult our notes gathered since the beginning of the school year and discuss each of the three-year-olds.

JANICE:

From our earliest comments: "Seemed to adapt very easily to things. A bit shy but could turn out to be a three-year-old leader... Very mature, alert, answers questions, knows symbols, asked to pour own juice... Listening, very happy, eager and interested in all new things."

On our Comprehensive Behavior Checklist for the week of January 19-30 we consistantly checked the following: Independence, Controlled, Listens, Plays with others, Shares, Is in all areas except blocks and trucks, Completes a task, Follows simple directions, Talks frequently, Answers questions.

We feel Janice is really turning out to be a leader. She seems to be interested and wants to get involved. Her attention span is long and her eye-hand coordination is excellent. She appears to be a healthy child, and very well adjusted. She was slow to start role-playing, perhaps a bit shy, but once started she does quite well. She does not seem to get as involved in a role as some of the other children, yet she does carry through a whole sequence of events.

FRANKLIN:

This child seems to be in a little world all his own. For example, he babbles about the most irrelevant things. Only recently has he even begun to participate to a very limited degree in Circle Time, doing the actions to a few songs. Otherwise, during Circle Time, he merely sits and once in a while says something like "My mommy has one of those snowmen." He also shows signs of perseveration.

Franklin is a very difficult child to reach. Many times when you speak to him, you have no idea if he comprehends. He will often initiate

conversation with the teachers, but does not talk or play with the other children. The subject of a conversation he initiates is his own, of course. If a teacher initiates the conversation, however, even if it is about something he is doing or something he has in his hand, he ignores what the teacher has said; if he responds verbally at all, it is usually with some irrelevant comment.

He also doesn't seem to be able to understand the "red line" limit set on the large motor area, although most of the other children were able to grasp that concept quite readily; occasionally they stray over the line but are quick to return to the area when reminded. Franklin, on the other hand, often drifts way over the line; when reminded about the limit he just looks up and smiles. We have taken him back over the line, showed it to him, explained that the trucks stay only on one side and why; but even after such a conversation, one has the feeling that Franklin hasn't understood one word.

GREG:

Greg's first days in school were very quiet. He followed the routine readily, but he did not interact with the materials or other children and was generally unresponsive.

With much encouragement and interaction with the teachers, Greg became involved in a variety of activities, mostly in the large motor area. Now he builds unique and complicated structures with Michael and David, loves to play "war," look at books, and role play a fireman, a soldier, or a bus driver. He definitely likes large muscle activities and has a tendency to get rough, occasionally losing control. His unusual outbursts of laughter are inappropriate at times.

Greg is still very unresponsive during group activities. He does do some simple follow-the-leader activities, but he never volunteers or answers questions.

We have noticed that Greg never goes to the art table, although occasionally he does paint on the easel; on coloring sheets he colors firmly and carefully. His eye-hand coordination is good.

At one point, we were concerned that Greg was absent for so many days. When we talked to his mother, we discovered he wasn't coming to school simply because he had decided that he didn't want to come anymore. He was sick part of the time and later his parents couldn't get him to go on the bus, until one day his father stayed home with him and saw that he got on. Since then his attendance has been regular.

JOHN:

John was assessed at the beginning of the year as an extremely hyperactive child, "completely undisciplined, inattentive, and uninhibited."

He would wander randomly from one activity to another without sticking to a task for any length of time; he found it very difficult to remain seated during Circle Time and had no comprehension of the routine or rules. However, with a great deal of individual attention, positive reinforcement for good behavior, and much guidance in handling toys, taking turns, sharing and putting materials away, John started to settle down in the classroom. He now understands the routine but limits have to be continually repeated for him.

John shows initative in starting new activities, but he doesn't always follow through, although his attention span has increased considerably. He participates in role playing and loves to be baby or father. He has a beginning understanding of numbers but little ability to differentiate colors, animals, and sizes.

John has been participating in group activities to some extent, and he is always eager to answer questions, although he doesn't always understand the question. His vocabulary is quite adequate, and he expresses himself and talks frequently with other children.

John's eye-hand coordination is quite poor, as is his sense of balance. He is continually falling and has no sense of danger. He has a high tolerance for pain--he doesn't show any sense of pain when he has been hurt.

With John's home situation as it is, it is easy to understand his insecurity in school. His mother is only recently divorced; his father kidnapped him earlier this year, and the family lost a child last summer through an overdose of medicine.

TERRY:

Evaluating Terry's performance during the first week of school, we noted that he was quiet, worked in quiet areas, identified many pictures, knew his symbol, liked Lotto and blocks, and followed instructions. Terry also showed early signs of cooperative play and role playing, although he had a difficult time sharing--he often grabbed toys away from other children and was quick to hit those who got in his way. Terry loves to play a "he-man" role. He dresses up with various hats (fireman, racing driver, cowboy), imitates the sounds of a motor running, and drives cars. Under Michael's leadership he started building with large blocks and was extremely proud of his accomplishments in this area. For awhile, in fact, he imitated everything Michael did.

In recent weeks Terry has become independent and controlled; he listens fairly well, plays with others, shares, follows simple instructions and talks frequently. However, he has stopped participating in group activities, has developed a few signs of negative behavior, is reluctant to accept authority, and occasionally sulks for long periods of time. Apparently he is going through a period of regression and is even sucking his thumb. (He seems to be imitating another child in class who is a chronic thumb sucker.)

SHARON R.:

Our early notations on Sharon indicate that she had difficulty following the routine, sitting still, remaining at the juice table, and keeping her hands to herself; she was, however, independent, happy and most involved with available materials.

Sharon is quite observant, noticing many things that the other children don't. She fears nothing and frequently plays in the large block area with the older boys. She enjoys role play and can carry through a sequence of activities in the housekeeping area. (She always remembers to use a hot pad when she takes baking out of the over.) Occasionally she carries her dramatic play to extremes. For example, one day she put on boxing gloves (brown driving gloves with leather palms) and started to cuff the teacher about the head and face.

Sharon is still impulsive, but she follows instructions, talks frequently, answers questions, plays with others and is an eager student. Her eye-hand coordination is poor, so she does not often do any art projects; she is beginning to enjoy painting, however.

JACKIE:

During the first week of school Jackie was unsure of her surroundings and the routine for the day. She was also a thumb sucker and still is. She seemed unable to follow instructions, but she liked to say "thank you." In fact she repeated her favorite statements frequently; on the climber, for example, she said "monkey bars, monkey bars." At the beginning of the year, she seemed to be extremely interested in art activities and quiet activities such as puzzles, flannel cut-outs, chalk and beads. Later she became interested in housekeeping activities; she would dress up and carry out a variety of activities, but mostly by herself.

Lately, she has been playing more with the other children. She is very dramatic and has an imaginary friend she frequently talks to very expressively on the telephone. Jackie follows the routine now with ease and appears very comfortable in her surroundings. She is quite independent and loves to put on her jacket and zip it by herself. She is still inattentive during Circle Time, however, and is reluctant to join in group activities, but she is beginning to learn the words to songs and occasionally volunteers to answer questions.

BRIAN:

At first Brian was very shy, quite withdrawn and nonverbal; he smiled, but just a little. Five months later he is still shy, withdrawn and nonverbal. He gets involved in many activities during Discovery Time but doesn't talk to anyone, including the teachers.

Brian's participation in Circle Time has been very limited. He is very hesitant to try new things, and in order to encourage him to participate we have intervened and helped him along. Under these conditions he has very shyly done some of the group activities along with the other children. Although he does not verbally interact with the others, he does do a lot of parallel play; often he follows another youngster around, attempting to imitate him.

Lately, it appears that Brian has been trying to gain attention from the other youngsters in a teasing sort of way. He will knock down some building that another has made only to look at the child and smile at him. I think he's asking in his own way, "Won't you notice me?" It will be interesting to see how this type of behavior develops.

SHARON W.:

Our first observations of Sharon in the classroom were that she "seeks security from adults and needs reassurance through physical contact." At first she was reluctant to leave the teacher's side until she became interested in the dolls and doll buggy. These she played with daily but remained uninterested in any other materials.

Early in November she became interested in art activities, although she always kept her doll with her. She has done quite well with art activities ever since. She has good eye-hand coordination and thoroughly enjoys coloring, pasting and printing. She now interacts a great deal with other children and is interested in using a variety of materials. She listens, follows instructions, answers questions, is attentive, joins in group activities, has learned the words to songs, and is quite independent.

Discovery Time Activities in the Large Motor Area

Besides our overall goals of encouraging cooperative play, sharing, taking turns, interaction with peers, verbalization, independence, and impulse control, we have observed that the concepts of size, shape, number, spacial relations, quantity, weight, balance, direction, and object properties and materials are being developed.

Using hollow blocks, unit blocks, assorted trucks, furniture, doll houses, boards for building, wheels, mats, the veriplay, the sand table, puppets, stuffed animals, rubber people and animals, the cube box and the tool table, the following structures have been built: houses with walls, floors, roofs and chimneys; apartment buildings, cars, buses, trains, boats, roads, tracks, sidewalks, mountains, racing cars, steam shovels, pianos, drums, mail boxes, fire engines, cranes, bulldozers, tractors, a car wash, forts, towers, bridges, skis, animal cages, farms, robots, household furniture, hospitals, and ambulances.

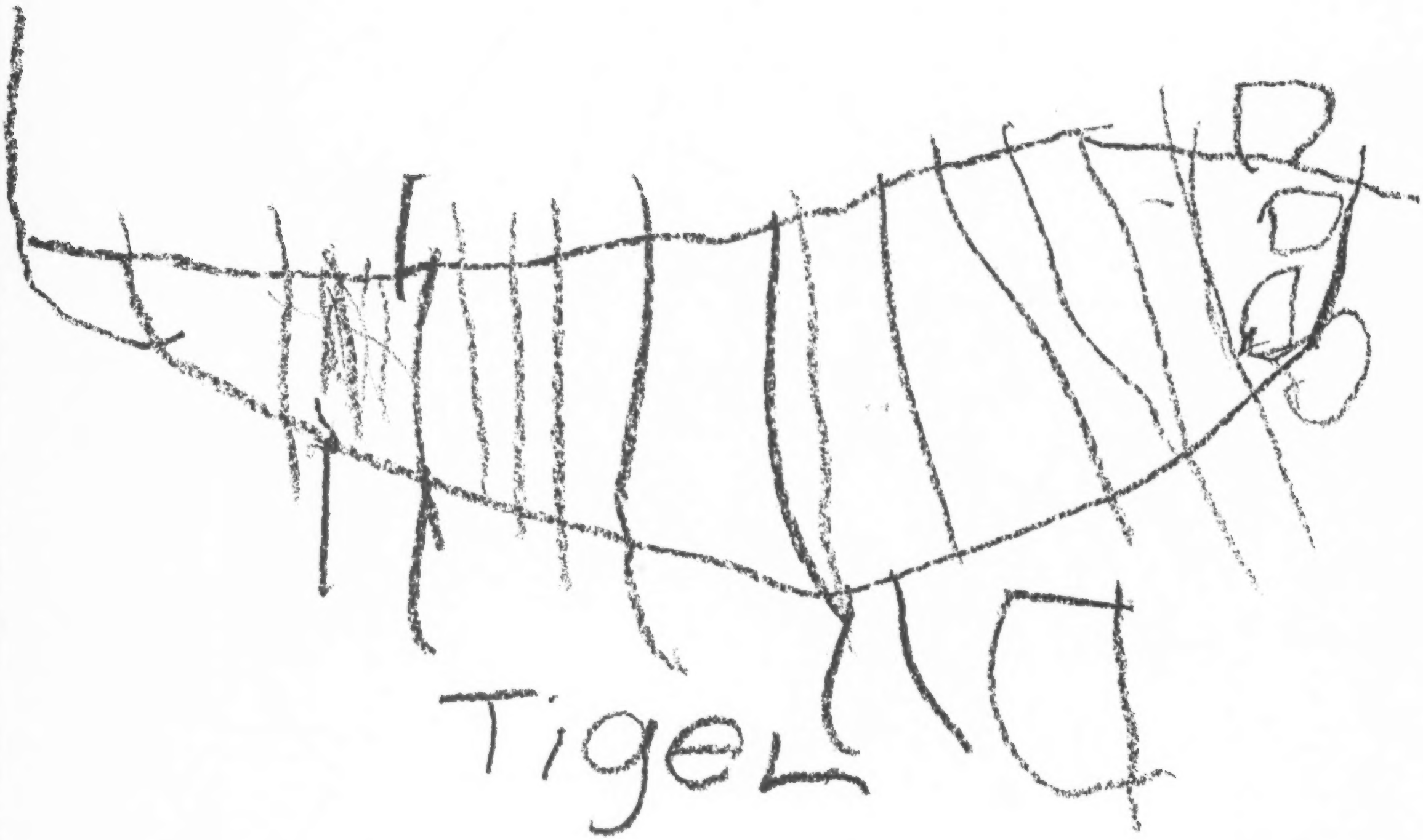
There is usually a great deal of activity in this area, and very often the structures that are built tie in directly with subjects discussed during Circle Time. When we did a unit about The Doctor, for example, the children built a hospital, an ambulance, a doctor's office, and a hospital room. This naturally led to a great deal of role play opportunities: the children took turns being a doctor, a nurse, an ambulance driver and a patient. We also used this unit as an opportunity to talk about weights and measures as we weighed and measured the height of each child.

The children have many opportunities to play cooperatively in this area, learning to share and take turns. A leader in a building project will often be heard saying, "Eddie, bring me another big block," or "Would you help me carry this?"

A great deal of verbalization also takes place. Here are some snippets of conversation that took place during the doctor unit:

"Open your mouth and say, Ah."
"Do you have a broken leg?"
"Here comes another patient."
"Lay down on the bed."
"I have a stomach ache."
"I have to go home now! Oh, oh, I forgot to close the doors."
"Who wants to be a patient?"
"Lay down on the bed."
"I'm going to give you a shot."
"He is to go to sleep first."
"Wake up. I'm going to give him pills, he's coughing."

"Somebody has to take her to the hospital."
"Here comes the ambulance."
"I think she's dead."
"A car bumped her."
"It's too late. Jackie's already dead."
"Here's some food to feed her."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